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Ounce of Prevention; Trichinosis

Contents in this issue:

- "An Ounce of Prevention," by Cecelia Rosenfelt, MD.
- "A Reprint: Comment on Trichinosis."

The following is a transcription of the March 1965 issue of *Dr. Royal Lee's Applied Trophology* newsletter, originally published by Standard Process Laboratories.

An Ounce of Prevention

By Cecelia Rosenfelt, MD
Los Angeles, California

This is a reprint of an article Dr. Rosenfelt addressed to her patients — Ed.

There is nothing more mandatory, nothing more vital to human happiness, than good health. I write this brief article mainly to encourage more thoughtful attention to the *prevention of illness*, because illness lessens and disrupts the harmony of family life.

I have seen much illness that might have been avoided, and I set down here some of my thoughts, having carefully reviewed and weighed my information, which I have received from physicians and other students of the problem.

I do not suggest that we should give an unreasonable amount of thought to the matter of health, for that might result in morbid introspection, if not produce hypochondria. But just as it is sensible to avoid an automobile accident or a contagious disease, so it seems reasonable that we should take obvious and relatively simple measures to protect ourselves against the serious disturbances produced by ill health. The sorrow that comes to a family where a member is seriously ill is too apparent to need emphasizing.

It is my hope that this effort may cause others to support those doctors and laymen who are encouraging *preventive medicine*, a program of infinite value and immediate necessity.

Not All Is Progress

It should be remembered that, although science when applied to medicine and other fields has made an immeasurable contribution to the happiness of modern man, it must be made crystal clear that there have also been tragic results in the wake of certain so-called scientific developments. Pesticides may have affected human, animal, and vegetable life to the point that made imperative an immediate reassessment of certain practices in agriculture and food production.

Rachel Carson, in her startling and timely book *Silent Spring*, dealt with the possible dangers to all forms of life from the indiscriminate use of pesticides. Another menace not sufficiently pointed up is that in the processing of some foods there are added preservatives, flavoring substances, or coloring materials, which have brought about the ingestion of chemicals that I believe contributes to ill health.

It is true that our food industry has made some remarkably praiseworthy progress. However, we are often "brainwashed" by publicity in one form or another that encourages or glosses over the use of artificial treatment of food, which is, in varying degrees, detrimental to good health.

Disease May Start Early

There is convincing clinical evidence that arthritis, high blood pressure, ulcers, and many other diseases equally serious, start early in life and long before symptoms manifest themselves. For instance, it has been found in autopsies of little children that they already showed evidence of arterial sclerosis.

If my observations do nothing more than to emphasize that many diseases very often have their origin in the poor feeding habits of our children, then this paper will have served its main purpose. *Preventive medicine*, in the form of a sound nutritional program, may often protect us against arthritis, heart disease, high blood pressure, and other serious disorders in later life.

As of this moment, there are not enough doctors, enough hospitals, nor other facilities, to provide adequate guidance for *preventing* disease. It has been said that, considering the number of diseases that afflict so many of us, we are a generation of comparative weaklings and physical defectives.

I do not imply that improper and inadequate nutrition alone is responsible for this alarming condition in our national community. However, it is my opinion that there has been insufficient training in the field of food chemistry to enable either physicians or the public to appreciate the enormous significance of good eating habits. Good nutrition makes a substantial contribution to the maintenance of good health and the avoidance of diseases so common to middle age, and the *prevention* of degenerative diseases is not so frequent among the aged.

The body is made up of proteins, fats, carbohydrates, and such minerals as copper, sulphur, calcium, phosphorous, iron, etc. Because foods likewise contain the same minerals, the significant value of nutrition should be better appreciated. Nature has provided all of essential needs through food. Sound nutritional eating habits would often avoid degenerative diseases so common to those of us in later life.

"Faddist" Views Confirmed

Not many years ago, there was an unreasonable and unscientific opinion that one must be a "faddist" if the urged one not to take sugar in excessive quantities, or to consider the dangers in careless use of pesticides, or to use only polysaturated fats, or to avoid untested preservatives, and to heed many other suggestions. It has taken all these years for manufacturers to begin to assure us that some of their soft drinks and their foods have no sugar content; that we need greater care in controlling the use of sprays; that polysaturated fats are included in certain foods; and now some of the bread manufacturers tell us that preservatives are not being used in their product. These *"faddist" views are now the accepted views.*

Some typical quotes by authorities:

> "Nutrition has become so important that it cannot be regarded casually; on the contrary, it must always be remembered in most, if not all, thorough diagnostic and therapeutic procedures."
> —*J.A.M.A.*, August 15, 1963

> "No pill, tablet, or capsule yet contains all the vitamins, minerals, trace elements, amino acids, enzymes, etc., to say nothing of the unknowns which are essential to good health."
> —Dean John B. Sanders of the University of California, School of Medicine

> "Americans consume more chemicals in their food than any other nation. At the same time American forecasts are the gloomiest in the world about the continued rise of cancer, high blood pressure, heart disease, congenital abnormalities, etc., in fact all the degenerative diseases. The United States leads the civilized world in chemicalized food and in degenerative diseases. She also leads the world in high living standards and ample food. Both of these should reduce instead of increasing the degenerative diseases. The only possible explanation of the United States more than equally sharing with the civilized world the rise in such diseases is that her food, *though the most abundant, is also the most unwholesome.*"
> —Dr. Franklin Bicknell, noted English authority

What we really need is more care in the food we eat and less reliance on unnecessary drugs. For instance, the Medical Letter is a publication of a "nonprofit" organization known as the Drug and Therapeutic Information, Inc. In July 1961 they issued a letter to physicians, which in part said:

> "About 400 new drugs are offered to physicians each year. As you know, much of the promotion for these drugs exaggerates therapeutic effects and understates side effects. Many of the drugs have not been adequately tested on humans, and—whatever the results of animal experiments—frequently prove to be either *ineffective or excessively hazardous in clinical use.*"

David Rutstein, MD, Chief of the Department of Preventive Medicine, Harvard Medical School, indicates the unfortunate position of the United States in the crucially important matter of infant mortality. The sensational and disturbing fact is that this, the richest and supposedly best fed country in all the world, ranks eleventh in terms of the infant mortality rate in the following listing provided by Dr. Rutstein:

Country	Mortality Rate
Sweden	15.3
The Netherlands	15.3
Norway	17.9
Finland	19.2
Denmark	10.1
New Zealand	20.3
Australia	20.4
Switzerland	21.2
England and Wales	21.4
Czechoslovakia	22.5
United States	25.3

He states, among other things: "Poor diet predisposes to premature births. Of babies born to women on excellent diets, 94% were found to be in good or superior condition. For women on the poorest diet, the percentage of healthy babies was a shockingly low 8%." It has been clearly demonstrated that breastfed babies of healthy mothers have an advantage over the formulas provided by industry, and that the breastfed child has a greater immunity in the first year or two of its life than babies who are fed on canned baby foods.

This paper must of necessity omit more than it can say concerning *emotional problems*. Ofttimes children are diagnosed and treated as being emotionally disturbed when, as a matter of fact, they are actually physically ill, often through bad eating habits. Thus it becomes a solemn obligation to provide nutritional information for the benefit of children as well as adults.

"Safe" Drugs Not Always So

There has not been enough care exercised in the protection of the public in the use of drugs that are freely prescribed. The Food and Drug Administration all too often has been tardy in giving adequate warning to the public. We now find authoritative statements that the tests that have been made of many drugs have been inadequate to assure safety and, by their repeated use, may actually produce serious pathological conditions in the human body. For instance, phenacetin, which was considered a relatively safe drug and is used in the manufacture of a great many pain relievers, has been found to contribute to kidney diseases.

Increasingly, the government has recognized the increase of poor health, and there are reports that are both authoritative and alarming as to the lack of vitality in our youth. These led to what is now called the "Physical Fitness Program."

Make Calories Nourishing

Preventive medicine, which is the essence of this effort, calls for care for all ages, and so I believe with many authorities that, while calories are necessary, the nutritional balance of the food we eat and its quality are far more important. If children who habitually eat school lunches made up of macaroni, donuts, sweet rolls, or a sandwich and soft drinks, their metabolic balance would be upset.

I must repeat that there is increasing evidence that children who are permitted to have soft drinks (even low calorie), ice cream, candies, jellies, jam, and other foods that contain sugar, to an excessive extent and to the neglect of substantial food, are more susceptible to illness.

Permit no one to persuade you that this is not true.

There are so many factors that need to be evaluated that only a physician, and preferably one trained in nutrition, can deal with them intelligently.

There are certainly other factors that lead to illness. One of the things that seems clear is that there has been too much emphasis on the number of calories that one should have. A calorie is simply a unit of heat. What should be stressed is the nutritional value of the foods that provide a proper balance of proteins, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals.

Eat Natural Foods

Children and adults would be assured a proper nutritional balance if they ate the natural foods whose value has not been impaired by processing. There should be a daily intake of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grain cereals, unprocessed meats, fish, poultry (not smoked, cured, or canned). Most breakfast cereals are not natural foods—they are manufactured foods with sugar, artificial color, and flavor.

It must also be emphasized that moderate exercise is needed, and that healthy, pleasant and stimulating thinking are among the things essential to producing a sound mind in a sound body.

This broad subject of *prevention of disease* has been disturbing me a long time. For this reason I devoted myself to ascertaining sound *rational* opinion as to basic facts with respect to the relation of nutrition to health and disease. We cannot afford to ignore them. It is my belief that the guidance of a physician trained in nutritional matters might spare much pain and expense for *all* members of a family.

A Reprint of Comment on Trichinosis

The pamphlet on trichinosis, published by the State of Illinois Department of Public Health, has this to say:

> "Trichinosis is a disease in which the muscles of the body are infested with tiny worms called trichinae, too small to be recognized with the unaided eye. There may be thousands of them—or only a few. In its acute form, the disease is extremely painful and weakening; sometimes it is fatal.
>
> "Trichinosis is incurable, except as the body eventually walls off the worms, but since the worms are acquired in food, the disease can be prevented—and prevention is, so far, the only way to bring it under control.
>
> "The extent of the trichinosis problem can be seen from the fact that a study of autopsies made in various parts of the United States revealed evidence of the infection in as high as 35 percent of all bodies examined. Authorities on the subject estimate that 16 percent, or some 22,000,000 persons, may have this strength-draining disease."

Then the article goes on to say that in the last fifty years, surveys have repeatedly shown that 1.5 percent of all hogs in the United States have trichinae, and that every man, woman, and child in the country stands a good chance of eating some infected pork two or three times a year.

Now, what about the symptoms of trichinosis? These symptoms vary in different persons, according to the intensity of the infection. Among the reported cases, five or six people die of the disease out of every hundred who become infected with the trichinae. In fatal cases, death usually occurs between the third and sixth week.

There are three stages of development of the larvae, and the symptoms vary according to these stages. In the first stage, during which the trichinae develop in the intestines and produce their young, there may be no symptom at all. Or the person may have nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal pain during the first week. He may also have weakness, tension and pain in the muscles, muscular twitching, swelling of the eyelids, and some fever may be present. Doctors have difficulty in diagnosing these symptoms. The symptoms have been diagnosed as ptomaine poisoning, intestinal flu, malaria, typhoid fever, appendicitis, colitis, peptic ulcers, gall bladder trouble and other ailments.

In the second stage, nine days to two weeks after infection, during which the larvae are distributed through the body, there develops more severe muscular pain and fever. The symptoms produced at this stage have at times been diagnosed as scarlet fever, mumps, frontal sinusitis, rheumatism, undulant fever and other diseases. When the larvae invade the muscles of the heart, the disease may be diagnosed as any number of heart diseases. When the larvae lodge in the brain and meninges, it has been diagnosed as meningitis and other diseases.

Professor Maurice C. Hall reported that in a study of cadavers from hospitals out of 222 cases of trichinosis not one was correctly diagnosed. U.S. Public Health Report makes this statement: "From the above, it appears that diagnosis of approximately fifty disease conditions may be made, and in practically all cases the actual basis of these conditions is the presence of trichinae."

[Note: This article first appeared in the December 1958 issue of *Applied Trophology*.]

This entry was posted in Applied Trophology, Volume 9 and tagged Bicknell (Franklin), drugs (pharmaceutical), food additives, parasites, pesticides, prenatal nutrition, processed foods and disease.

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+1 (866) 407-9323
+1 (970) 461-4602
5740 Boeing Drive, Loveland, CO, 80538
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